

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTIAGO 5467

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, CI
SUBJECT: "PINOCHETISMO" -- CHILE'S POLITICAL FUTURE IN
THE BALANCE

REFS: (A) SANTIAGO 5421, (B) SANTIAGO 5276 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: WITH THE LETELIER CASE INDICTMENTS EXPECTED SHORTLY, POLITICAL LINES IN CHILE ARE HARDENING. MANY PRO-JUNTA CHILEANS NOW BELIEVE THAT THE BEST WAY TO PRESERVE THE POSITIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MILITARY REGIME IS TO HAVE PINOCHET REPLACED BY ANOTHER GENERAL. ANOTHER, AND PERHAPS MORE INFLUENTIAL, SEGMENT OF THE LEADERSHIP BELIEVES THAT THE ONLY WAY TO ACHIEVE THE SAME OBJECTIVE IS BY KEEPING PINOCHET IN POWER. BOTH GROUPS SEE CHILE'S POLITICAL FUTURE IN BALANCE BUT THEIR PRESCRIPTIONS ARE INCOMPATIBLE. IN THE CONTECT OF THIS BASIC INTERNAL DIVISION A NATIONAL YOUTH LEADER ANNOUNCED JULY 10 THAT HE AND HIS FOLLOWERS ARE NOW "PINOCHETISTAS." THE SPEECH SO FAR HAS RECEIVED INDIRECT OFFICIAL BACKING IN THE FORM OF TELEVISION TIME AND NEWSPAPER ADS. IT HAS BECOME A MATTER OF WIDE-SPREAD MEDIA AND PRIVATE COMMENTARY, WITH MOST CHILEANS WE ENCOUNTER STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PERSONALITY CULT. GENERAL LEIGH'S CONDEMNATION OF THE MOVEMENT MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED

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TO THE CABINET GROUP'S CENSORING OF HIM JULY 20. PINOCHET HAS NOT YET TAKEN A DEFINITE PUBLIC POSITION. IF HE COMES DOWN IN SUPPORT OF "PINOCHETISMO" THE PRESENT FRAGILE UNITY OF PRO-GOC POLITICAL FORCES WILL COME APART; IF HE DISOWNS "PINOCHETISMO" THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE WILL BE OUSTED PEACEFULLY OVER THE LETELIER CASE INCREASES. END SUMMARY.

2. PINOCHETISMO. THE NATIONAL YOUTH FRONT (FRENTE JUVENIL DE UNIDAD NACIONAL) IS OSTENSIBLY AN AUTONOMOUS, INDEPENDENT YOUTH MOVEMENT. IN FACT IT UNDOUBTEDLY RECEIVES ITS FUNDING FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES AND ITS POLITICAL DIRECTION FROM PERSONS IN AND OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT WHO ARE CLOSE TO PINOCHET. THE CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE YOUTH FRONT IS IGNACIO ASTETE, A 1977 IVP GRANTEE. ON JULY 10, IN LA SERENA, BEFORE PINOCHET AND 5,000 YOUTH, ASTETE DELIVERD A SPEECH COMMEMORATING NOATIONAL YOUTH DAY AND THE THIRD ANNIVERSAYF OF THE YOUTH FRONT. REFERRING TO THE NEW INSTITUTIONALITY AND TO INTERNATIONAL ATTACKS AGAINST CHILE, ASTETE DECLARED: "... CONFRONTED WITH THE FACT THAT HE (PINOCHET) IS THE PRINCIPAL TARGET OF OUR ADVERSARIES, WE DECLARE OURSELVES PUBLICLY AND EXPLICITLY TO PINOCETISTAS, AND CALL ON ALL CHILEANS TO CLOSE RANKS BEHIND A CIVIC MOBILIZATION WHICH WILL CNVERT PINOCHETISMO INTO A SWEEPING FORCE WHICH WILL CONSOLIDATE THE NEW DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONALITY. IN DOING SO, WE ARE NOT GUIDED BY ADULATION NOR PERSONALISM. WE ARE MOVED BY THE RIGHTNESS OF THE LEADERSHIP WHICH PROVIDENCE HAS GIVEN TO HIM, WHICH HE HAS KNOWN HOW TO EXERCISE, AND WHICH IS VITAL TO CHIL'S FUTURE."

3. ALL TELEVISION STATIONS BROADCAST A TAPE OF THE ASTETE SPEECH THE NIGHT OF JULY 11 AND AGAIN ON JULY 16. ON JULY 15 SANTIAGO'S LEADING NEWSPAPERS "EL MERCURIO" AND "LA TERCERA" CARRIED FULL PAGE ADVERTISEMENTS PROMOTING ASTETE'S SPEECH AS WELL AS THAT OF ANOTHER PRO-GOC YOUTH LEADER.
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4. PUBLIC REACTION. THE OPPOSITION TO MILITARY RULE, WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WHO HAVE MOST ACCESS TO THE MEDIA IN THE LEAD, HAVE QUICKLY DENOUNCED PINOCHETISMO IN UNCOMPROMISING TERMS. CLAUDIO ORREGO IS AGAIN IN THE FOREFRONT: "WHTAT WE ARE WITNESSING IS HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL MANEUVER, NOT ONE OF SPONTANEOUS YOUTHFUL ZEAL. THIS IS GRAVE. IT HAS OCCURRED FREQUENTLY IN HISTORY THAT AUTHORITARIAN REGIMS SEEK TO EXTRACT INTERNAL POLITICAL ADVANTAGE FROM INTERNATIONAL CRISES." ORREGO PUTS THE BLAME ON "GROUPS INSIDE THE REGIME" HE CONCLUDES THAT NATIONAL UNITY IN THE FACE OF INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS (AMONG THEM THE BEAGLE) IS ESSENTIAL; THIS CANNOT BE ACHIEVED BY PERSONALISM -- BUT RATHER BY A QUICK RETURN TO DEMOCRACY.

5. FROM PINOCHET'S PERSPECTIVE THE REACTION OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WAS PREDICTABLE AND PERHAPS WELCOME. THE MORE IMPORTANT ISSUE IS HOW THE SUPPORTES OF THIS REGIME RESPOND. TO DATE, IN THE MEDIA AND AMONG THOSE CHILEANS WITH WHOM EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE MOST CONTACT, THE TREND IS STRONGLY NEGATIVE. LAWYER PABLO RODRIGUEZ, FORMER HEAD OF RIGHT-WING "PATRIA Y LIBERTAD" CALLED PINOCHETISMO "A POLITICAL ERROR OF INCALCULABLE DIMENSIONS." HE LABELED IT A PERSONALITY CULT AND SID THAT ASTETE HAD DONE

A GREAT DISSERVICE TO PINOCHET. FORMER NATIONAL PARTY
PARLIAMENTARIAN FIGURES MAXIMIANO ERRAZURIZ AND PEDRO IBANEZ
("I CANNOT COMMENT WHAT SOME YOUTH -- WHAT IS HIS NAME? --
SAYS.") LIKEWISE SHOWED THEIR DISGUST. A LETTER TO ASTETE
SIGNED BY 33 PRO-GOVERNMENT YOUTH SUPPORTERS, DATED JULY 14,
CONVEYED DISPLEASURE WITH THE ASTETE SPEECH. AMONG OTHER
THINGS, THE LETTER, COPIES OF WHICH WERE SENT TO PINOCHET AND
MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA, SERVED NOTICE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS
ONE OF FOUR (ARMED FORCES) INSTITUTIONS, NOT OF ONE PERSON; REMINDED
ASTETE THAT THE GOC, IN ITS DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ISSUED
IN MARCH 1974, PROMISED TO "DEPERSONALIZE POWER, AVOIDING ALL
'CAUDILLISMO' FOREIGN TO OUR IDIOSYNCRACY"; AND CHARGED THAT ASTETE
WAS OPENING THE DOOR TO "AMBITIOUS AND DIVISIVE ELEMENTS."

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DISSIMINATION COORDINATED WITH SS/O PER TOBIN.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTIAGO 5467

6. GENERAL LEIGH. AS REPORTED REFTEL A, THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
ISSUED A STATEMENT JULY 20 CENSORING AIR FORCE JUNTA MEMBER LEIGH
FOR COMMENTS MADE IN A RECENT INTERVIEW WITH AN ITALIAN JOURNALIST.
IN OBTAINING CONFIRMATION OF WHAT HE HAD SAID IN THAT INTERVIEW,
A LOCAL RADIO STATEION ASKED LEIGH WHAT HE THOUGHT OF PINOCHETISMO.
HE REPLIED SCATHINGLY THAT IT MUST BE SOME SORT OF JOKE AND THAT
HE EXPECTED PINOCHET TO HIMSELF DISOWN IT IN "8 OR

10 DAYS." LEIGH'S COMMENTS WERE BROADCAST AT 2:00 P.M. JULY 19.
THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MET LATER THAT AFTERNOON.

7. THE INTELLECTUAL ROTTS OF PINOCHETISMO. CONSERVATIVE IDEOLOGUE
AND PINOCHET ADVISOR JAIME GUZMAN IS RUMORED TO BE THE INTELLECTUAL
INSPIRATION FOR ASTETE'S SPEECH. PARTIALLY IN AN "ERCILLA"
ARTICLE THIS WEEK, BUT MORE CANDIDLY IN A LONG DISCUSSION WITH
AN EMBASSY OFFICER JULY 19, GUZMAN HAS EXPLAINED THE IMPORTANCE
OF PINOCHETISMO. GUZMAN TAKES OFF FROM THE FACT THAT MANY PRO-
JUNTA CHILEANS ARE THINKING AND SAYING THAT PINOCHET HAS BECOME
A LIABILITY TO THE REGIME. THEY BELIEVE THAT BY DROPPING PINOCHET
FOR ANOTHER MILITARY LEADER CHILE'S INTERNATIONAL DIFFICULTIES
WILL DIMINISH SHARPLY. ACCORDING TO GUZMAN, THEY ARE PROFOUNDLY
WRONG IF THEY BELIEVE THE NEXT MILITARY LEADER WILL BE ABLE
TO CARRY OUT PRESENT PLANS FOR CREATING A NEW INSTITUTIONALITY. THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF PINOCHET'S DEPARTURE OVER THE LETELIER
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AFFAIR WILL BE TO DISCREDIT THE MILITARY REGIME IN GENERAL.
PINOCHET'S REPLACEMENT WILL BE A CARETAKER FOR STEPPED-UP
TRANSITION BACK TO CIVILIAN RULE. ECONOMIC POLICY WILL ALSO BE
SHARPLY AMENDED. FURTHERMORE, GUZMAN GOES ON, EVEN IF THIS WERE
NOT NECESSARILY THE OUTCOME OF PINOCHET'S OUSTER, THERE IS
NO OTHER MILITARY LEADER IN VIEW WHO HAS THE NECESSARY COMBINATION
OF ABILITIES TO MAINTAIN PRESENT POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES. IN
SUM, PINOCHET IS INDISPENSABLE.

8. GUZMAN TOLD THE EMBASSY OFFICER THAT THE CRITICAL POLITICAL
QUESTION RIGHT NOW IS WHETHER PINOCHET IS GOING TO GIVE AN
EXPLICIT CLEAR SIGNAL FOR HIS SUPPORT OF PINOCHETISMO, IF
HE DOES NOT, GUZMAN BELIEVES HE WILL BE FINISHED POLITICALLY
AND HIS PRESENT SUPPORTERS WILL BEGIN TO LOOK FOR ACCOMMODATION
WITH WHOMEVER OR WHATEVER IS TO COME NEXT, HAVING CONCLUDED
THAT PINOCHET SEES NO WAY OUT OF THE LETELIER BOX.

9. COMMENT: PDC SOURCES HAVE REPORTED A DETAILED PLAN
SUPPOSEDLY PROPOSED BY EX-DINA HEAD MANUEL CONTRERAS TO
PINOCHET AS THE ONLY WAY FOR HIM TO SURVIVE THE IMPACT OF
THE LETELIER CASE INDICTMENTS OF CONTRERAS AND TWO OTHER
CHILEAN ARMY OFFICERS (REFTEL B). PINOCHETISMO AS SUCH WAS NOT
PART OF THAT PLAN, BUT THE THRUST IS IDENTICAL -- THE STRENGTHENING
OF PINOCHET OVER INSTITUTIONAL RIVALS. WE HAVE SOME HINTS THAT
CONTRERAS WAS AT FIRST SUPPORTIVE OF GUZMAN'S PINOCHETISMO PROPOSAL
BUT HAS SINCE HAD SECOND THOUGHTS BECAUSE OF THE GENERALLY
NEGATIVE REACTION.

10. PINOCHETISMO IS, WE BELIEVE, STILL IN TRIAL BALLOON STATUS.
THE LEIGH CONFRONTATION OVER THE ITALIAN NEWSPAPER ARTICLE
TAKES ON AN ADDED DIMENSION BECAUSE OF THIS, LEIGH CAREFULLY
LEFT THE DOOR OPEN FOR PINOCHET TO DISOWN THE NEW MOVEMENT BUT

IS FAR FROM CERTAIN HE WILL. THERE ARE DANGERS IN TWO DIRECTIONS.

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IF LEIGH BACKS DOWN OVER HIS RECENT STATEMENTS PINOCHETISMO WILL GET A BOOST SIMPLY BY VIRTUE OF THE FACT THAT PINOCHET HAD OUTSTARED HIS PRINCIPAL MILITARY CRITIC. IF LEIGH DECIDES INSTEAD THAT CONFRONTATION IS INEVITABLE AND BETTER NOW THAN LATER, THEN THE DIE FOR PINOCHETISMO COULD BE CAST. THERE MAY STILL BE

MIDDLE GROUND IN WHICH NEITHER PINOCHET NOR LEIGH IS YET READY TO FORCE THE ISSUE TO A CONCLUSION BUT IN WHICH LEIGH MAINTAINS HIS INDEPENDENT STANCE. A LEIGH STATEMENT IS PROMISED FOR NEXT WEEK.

1. DESPITE PINOCHET'S REPORTED POPULARITY AMONG SOME SECTORS OF THE POOR AND IN RURAL AND SMALL-TOWN CHILE, WE HAVE A HARD TIME SEEING PINOCHETISMO AS A VIABLE POLITICAL MOVEMENT EXCEPT UNDER RENEWED POLICE STATE CONDITIONS. IF PINOCHET GOES THAT ROUTE HE WILL LOSE MUCH OF HIS MIDDLE CLASS SUPPORT AND SOME OF THAT FROM THE UPPER-INCOME SECTORS. ON THE OTHER HAND, JAIME GUZMAN MAY BE RIGHT WHEN HE ARGUES THAT THE FAILURE OF PINOCHET TO OPENLY SUPPORT PINOCHETISMO WILL MAKE HIS REPLACEMENT MORE LIKELY.

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